

Partisan Politics is Propaganda

This morning's *Drudge Report* has a rather ominous headline:



The headline is in reference to the so-called [“nuclear option”](#) that Senate Republicans may deploy in trying to get Neil Gorsuch confirmed to the Supreme Court. Currently, 60 votes are required for a Supreme Court nominee to proceed to final passage. But Democrats are threatening to filibuster the vote ([update: they just did](#)), which has led Republicans to threaten removing the filibuster barrier. The removal of the barrier would allow Republicans to confirm Gorsuch with a simple majority vote.

Both threats are seen as a sign of a move away from any semblance of bipartisanship in Washington, D.C.

My initial reaction? Big whoop. Is the highly partisan and polarized character of today's American politics something we didn't already know about?

That said, we should worry—not just because of this one example—but more because of the non-rational, partisan shit-show that American politics has become. Because, here's the thing: partisan politics is a form of propaganda.

In his book [The Betrayal of the West](#), philosopher Jacques Ellul refers to,

“[T]he great law of propaganda that Hitler enunciated: ‘Never admit your enemy is right in even the smallest thing.’ If you deny that your enemy can say anything true, you are simply a propagandist.”

I can't actually locate where Hitler said this. Near as I can tell, it's from [a psychological profile](#) of Hitler prepared during the war by the United State Office of Strategic Services, which reads:

“His primary rules were: never allow the public to cool off; never admit a fault or wrong; never concede that there may be some good in your enemy; never leave room for alternatives; never accept blame; concentrate on one enemy at a time and blame him for everything that goes wrong; people will believe a big lie sooner than a little one; and if you repeat it frequently enough people will sooner or later believe it.”

Great. So basically, the day-to-day actions of both of America's major political parties today closely resemble the propaganda techniques employed by Adolf Hitler.

Meanwhile, much of the American public still attaches a large chunk of purpose in their lives to closely following politics.